

## **Facts about “Green” Forest Certification Under The Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program**

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program is a comprehensive system of principles, objectives, performance measures and indicators that integrate the perpetual growing and harvesting of trees with the protection of wildlife, plants, soil, water and air quality.

The SFI program was adopted by the American Forest and Paper Association in 1994. It is the dominant certification system in the US and North America, with about 100 million acres certified in the US alone.

The SFI Standard (SFIS) was created in 1994, and has evolved considerably since. The SFI Standard spells out the comprehensive requirements of compliance with the program.

The Standard was recently revised and strengthened to more closely align with the Montreal Process\*, making it easier to relate to other global forest certification programs for comparison purposes. In addition, it now contains new indicators that require a closer examination of the ecological impacts of forest conversion and the impact of commercial forestry on biodiversity. The Standard has also added a provision for the definition and conservation of old-growth forests, mandating participants work to identify and protect ecologically significant forests based on scientific data. The current SFI Standard has eleven broad objectives, 27 performance measures, and 97 detailed core indicators.

The SFI Standard is now governed by a fully independent Sustainable Forestry Board (SFB.) The SFB is composed of 15 nationally recognized science and conservation leaders, as well as forest landowners. Two thirds of the Board members come from a wide range of non-industry interests. Board members include the presidents of The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the American Bird Conservancy, and a former Dean of Duke University’s School of the Environment. Five Board members are representatives of the American Forest and Paper Association.

The SFI Standard is applied by fully independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditors, and is recognized as comprehensive and detailed in its coverage of core forest management practices such as water quality and riparian protection, soil protection, protection from fire and disease, environmental monitoring, cultural/archeological protection, public use, and efficiency of resource utilization. It also rigorously addresses sustained yield, clearcutting, reforestation, road building, wildlife habitat, biodiversity protection, chemical use, employee training, and many other topics.

Major SFI principles include continuous management improvement, a strong role for science, objective management standards, and external promotion of sustainability, as well as recognizing high standards of protection for water, air, soil, fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and public/employee health and safety.

Many landowners who have been audited against the SFI Standard find they must make significant changes to their management practices to qualify for certification.

More information about the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program is available at [www.aboutsfi.org](http://www.aboutsfi.org).

\* Formed in Geneva, Switzerland, in June 1994, the Montréal Process is the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests. Europe's forests are not included, and are being addressed by the Helsinki or Pan-European Process.